

VII.—On a new Piscatory Genus of the Strigine Family.—By the same.

Order RAPTORES. Family STRIGIDÆ.

Genus new. *Cultrunguis*, Mihi.

Generic character :—

Bill subequal to the head, straightened as far as the cere, gradually curved beyond it, moderately compressed, strong. Wings medial, equal to the tail, four and five longest and subequal; three first considerably gradated, first not pectinated. Tarsi rather elevate, partially or wholly nude, reticulate. Toes nude, and reticulate with three or four scales next the talons; the anteriors subequal. Talons medial, stout, subequal, compressed, cultrated below*. Egrets as in *Bubo*, disc and ears as in *Noctua*. Tail short.

It is some time since Gen. HARDWICKE made known to science an owl with nude tarsi†. The circumstance was remarkable, but it does not seem to have led him to any further investigation. Some years back I discovered a similarly-characterised species, and at the same time noted that the talons were sharpened like a knife on their lower edge. In process of time I discovered another species with the tarsi half naked; and this also had cultrated talons. But my specimens of both species happened to have the stomach empty; and I had no immediate means of observing the manners of the birds. In 1830 I had opportunity to note that both species flew well by day, and were constantly found on the banks of rivers. Analogy with the eagles then led me to suspect that these birds might possibly be fishers: but still, until I had seen them fishing, or had obtained specimens with fish in the stomach, I could have no safe ground for assuming so extraordinary a fact. I have now, however, procured specimens with the stomach full of fish, and fish only‡; and I presume that the *expost-facto* inference from structure to habits will scarcely be questioned. Whether HARDWICKE'S owl will, when better known, constitute another genus of the fishing owls, remains to be proved: but that bird is sufficiently distinguished from either of mine by its shielded tarsi. In forming a new genus for two new species, essentially alike, and very materially differing both in conformation and habits from all known birds of this family, I rely upon the sanction and support of men of science. And I shall only add, before proceeding to give the specific characters, that those of the genus have been derived from a freer use of ordinary external characters than has heretofore been made in

* Hence the generic name, *cultratus* and *unguis*.† Of the yet earlier *Strix nudipes* of Daudin, nothing seems accurately known.

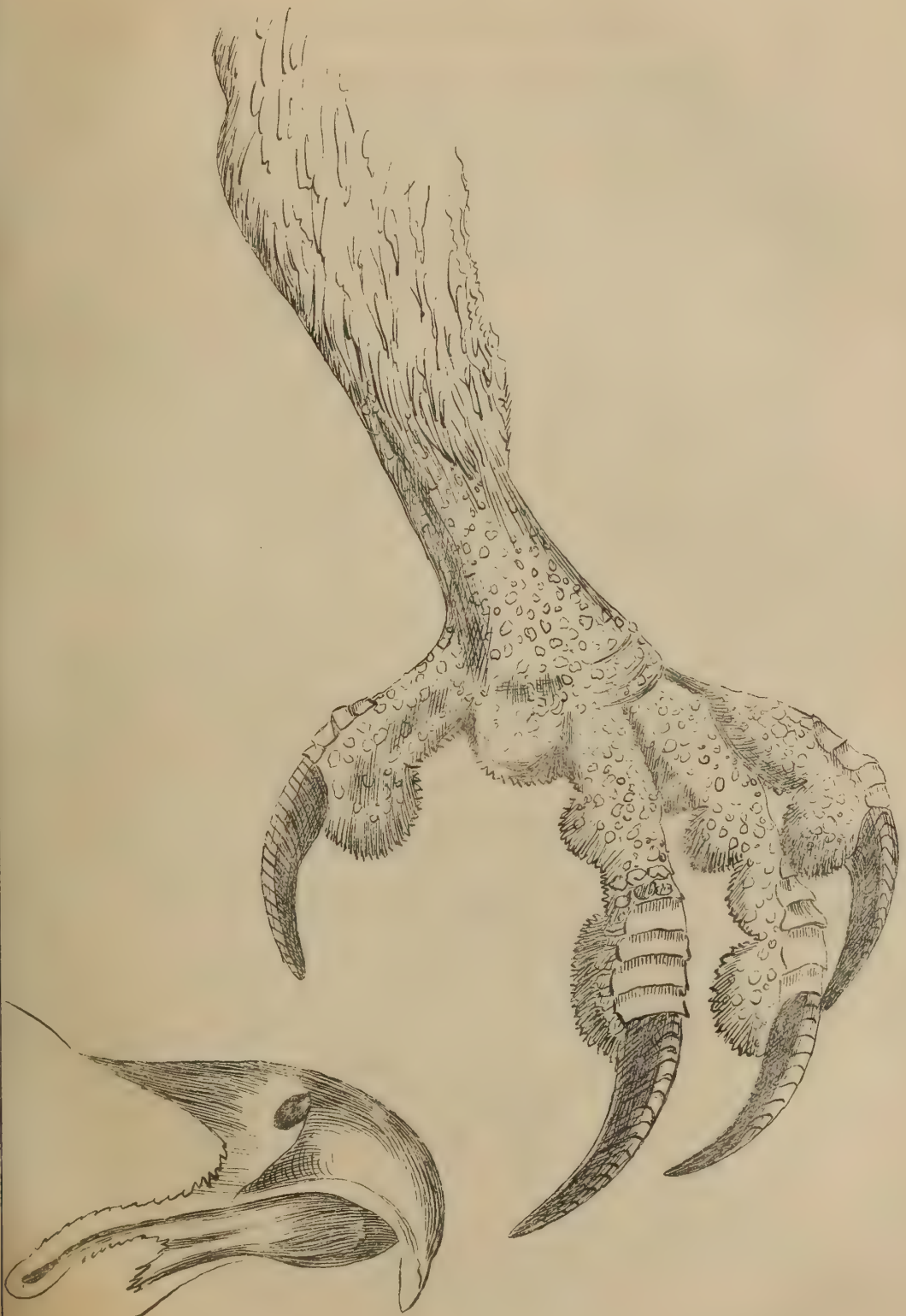
‡ I have just discovered that they prey on crabs as well as common fish.

respect to the Strigine birds. CUVIER regarded these birds as constituting but one genus. VIGORS raised this genus to the rank of a family, advancing CUVIER's subgenera to genera. But VIGORS left CUVIER's character as he found them,—whether wisely or not, I shall not presume to say. I suspect, however, that, as species multiply and become accurately known, resort will be had to characters analogous to those by which the Diurnal Raptores (to go no further) are generically distinguished, if not from a sense of the superficialness of the old characters, yet from a want of determinate new ones. It is surely reasonable to distinguish all the *Raptores* upon similar principles; and, as the external construction of the Strigine birds certainly renders this quite practicable, so, I believe, that the analogies thus necessarily suggested to the student between them and the Falconidæ, would tend to the higher uses of the science.

First species: *C. Flavipes*, yellow-footed Cultrunguis, Mihi. Head, neck and body below, bright rusty, each plume striped down the shaft with saturate brown; the stripes narrower below than above: disc and leg-plumes immaculate: back wings and tail, saturate brown, transversely barred, and largely emarginated and tipt, with rusty; the bars interrupted on the shafts, and frequently resembling triangular indentations: four bars across the great quills and tail feathers; and the tips of both largely paled: plumes of the thighs and tarsi downy: half the latter nude: nude portion and the toes, flavescent fleshy grey: talons horn yellow: bill blue, with a dusky tip: iris bright yellow: edges of eye-lids black: twenty-two to twenty-three inches long by 55 to 58 wide. Weight three and a half lbs.

N. B. The sexes resemble each other both in size and colours.

Second species: *Cultrunguis Nigripes*, Mihi. Head, neck, back, and whole body below, pale earthy brown, with a fawn tinge; paler and albescent on the abdominal surface; each plume striped down the shaft with a saturate brown mark, which is narrower below than above; and each also crossed with numerous slender zigzags of brownish fawn colour: wings and tail saturate brown, triangularly indented or cross-barred, and broadly tipt, with obscure rufous yellow, which is freckled, for the most part, on the tertiaries, and scapulars, with brown: great quills and rectrices, quadricinctate, as in the preceding: disc earthy brown: thighs pale fawn: both immaculate: throat white, and almost or wholly unmarked: wings albescent towards the roots of the feathers: bill dusky horn: iris bright yellow: edge of eye-lid black: tarsi and toes, purpurescent dusky: talons the same, with black points: thighs and knees to the front, covered with downy plumes: tarsi and toes, nude: size of the last.



Cultrunguis Flavipes - with *Nigripes* type of the Genus
Cultrunguis

N.B. inner side of the foot: 'size of nature.